

APPENDIX B

Public Comment on Proposed Plastic Bag Ban

Waste Prevention & Green Building Staff

10/8/2012

This document is a compilation of public comment that was collected via email and US postal service mail from comment period 7/24/2012 to 9/17/2012. The comment period spans the day after the 7/23/2012 City Council work session until 9/17/2012, the day of the public hearing on the proposed bag ban ordinance. An additional email received on 9/22/2012 is also included in this document.

Bag Ban Public Testimony 7/24/2012 – 9/17/2012

Email 7/24/12:

Ms. Scafa:

Just make being stupid illegal, hmmm well that won't work, there is not enough jail space.

I am a enthusiast recycler, so it is hard for me to understand why anyone would throw anything in the garbage to add to Short Mountain, if it could be reused or recycled.

Plastic bags have a function, people will just end up buying plastic bags to pick up dog poop, & that usually goes in the garbage.

You could do two things together, rather than ban them: put a 10 cent deposit on plastic bags, the new ones would have wording an a bar code on them, and... make them biodegradable.

They disintegrate in less than 6 months into powder, kinda messy, but probably even sooner in the land fill, & that place is messy anyway.

It is sad that people aren't better recyclers, maybe education, retraining of people's brain, I am not sure how much less plastic would really end up in the landfill, have you researched that using data from other places that have banned plastic bags?

I prefer paper bags personally myself, but plastic bags do have a function.

Sincerely,

Joe L. Claska

7/25/2012

597 Covey Lane
Eugene, OR 97401

Just a comment and question for your consideration re: plastic bags. Commercially sold garbage bags are plastic. I have used any plastic store bags as garbage bags for years - they are free and the same material as a garbage bag I would purchase. If plastic shopping bags from the store are gone, people will still use plastic bags for their trash and these still go to the landfill. How are we really gaining anything? Are you going to require all merchants to pull all forms of plastic bags from their stores? Consider the economic impact please. "Biodegradable" plastic bags are still very expensive and only available in very limited sizes. They are beyond what most people will be willing to spend. Paper is not a good alternative for "wet" trash containment or keeping foods fresh. I am not sure we have adequate viable alternatives yet available.

7/31/12

From: webwrks@comcast.net

To: Eugene Mayor, City Council, and City Manager

Subject: Plastic bag info worth considering before the upcoming meeting

TO ALL COUNCILORS AND THE MAYOR:

This email is being addressed to all of you prior to the scheduled Sept 17th public meeting regarding a blanket ban on all plastic store bags that is being proposed. Not only do I completely disagree with such a ban but I think that it is a hypocritical approach and has unexpected consequences as seems to be the case with "hastily pushed" policy that we have witnessed lately. When will our politicians learn to slow down and think things through; carefully considering the figurative big picture, before recklessly moving ahead with costly and/or ill thought out policy that is rooted in sensationalism? This is one such proposal!

Most don't dispute the need to be as clean and efficient as possible, as current technology allows. This is evidenced in the fact that many such store bags that are to be banned are now made of "bio-plastics" that are derived from renewable and biodegradable biomass sources; sources such as vegetable fats and oils, corn starch, pea starch or microbiota (a monotypic genus of evergreen coniferous shrub in the cypress family - refer to wikipedia). These bags are so lightweight and flimsy that they can barely contain any heavy groceries that they are designed to carry but can and are REUSED by many as trash can liners, pet waste bags, trash bags for vehicles on road trips, laundry and/or shoe bags when traveling or camping, etc. I have used them for all of those purposes as I'm sure many others have and there are probably many more applications of which I am unaware. That being said, the moniker of "single use bag" that is attached to these bags is an outright fabrication. In fact, let's expand on that thought and really get to the heart of the matter. What indeed are SINGLE USE BAGS are the commercially produced trash can liners designed for "single use" application. Not only are they so heavy duty that they do not easily break down but they are designed specifically to go from the manufacturers box and into the landfill, via your trash can, where they will sit for years. So I will ask a simple question. What do "you" line your trash cans with? Are you "recycling" a store bag by giving it a second or third life? I recycle 100% of everything that comes through my house and have been for about 20 years now. I have about 15 tote bags that I shop with UNLESS I need more trash can liners (in which case, I collect more store bags instead).

Let's use common sense and not be hypocrites. Jumping out of the frying pan and into the fire is not the right approach. I already go two weeks with the smallest trash can available before needing a pickup but if these bags are banned, then I will be forced to buy heavy duty, non-biodegradable trash can liners and contribute to the already massive piles of those products within the landfills. How many others will be forced to change products as well? You could be doing more harm than good with this approach.

The following is an OSU news and research communication article written January 4, 2011. I have pasted it so that you can see the over-exaggeration in regards to these bags. While they are not a perfect solution to our waste needs, they have been greatly improved. The fact that photosynthetic microbes within the ocean are thriving on plastic particles just goes to show that more research is needed (not rash decisions), and that they might not be as bad as depicted (especially if organically derived). Just remember that haste in decision making has the potential for huge waste and a host of other problems as well.

OSU prof: Ocean garbage patch 'grossly exaggerated'

CORVALLIS, Ore. – There is a lot of plastic trash floating in the Pacific Ocean, but claims that the “Great Garbage Patch” between California and Japan is twice the size of Texas are grossly exaggerated,

according to an analysis by an Oregon State University scientist.

Further claims that the oceans are filled with more plastic than plankton, and that the patch has been growing tenfold each decade since the 1950s are equally misleading, pointed out Angelique “Angel” White, an assistant professor of oceanography at Oregon State.

“There is no doubt that the amount of plastic in the world’s oceans is troubling, but this kind of exaggeration undermines the credibility of scientists,” White said. “We have data that allow us to make reasonable estimates; we don’t need the hyperbole. Given the observed concentration of plastic in the North Pacific, it is simply inaccurate to state that plastic outweighs plankton, or that we have observed an exponential increase in plastic.”

White has pored over published literature and participated in one of the few expeditions solely aimed at understanding the abundance of plastic debris and the associated impact of plastic on microbial communities.

That expedition was part of research funded by the National Science Foundation through C-MORE, the Center for Microbial Oceanography: Research and Education.

The studies have shown is that if you look at the actual area of the plastic itself, rather than the entire North Pacific subtropical gyre, the hypothetically “cohesive” plastic patch is actually less than 1 percent of the geographic size of Texas.

“The amount of plastic out there isn’t trivial,” White said. “But using the highest concentrations ever reported by scientists produces a patch that is a small fraction of the state of Texas, not twice the size.”

Another way to look at it, White said, is to compare the amount of plastic found to the amount of water in which it was found. “If we were to filter the surface area of the ocean equivalent to a football field in waters having the highest concentration (of plastic) ever recorded,” she said, “the amount of plastic recovered would not even extend to the 1-inch line.”

Recent research by scientists at the Woods Hole Oceanographic Institution found that the amount of plastic, at least in the Atlantic Ocean, hasn’t increased since the mid-1980s – despite greater production and consumption of materials made from plastic, she pointed out.

“Are we doing a better job of preventing plastics from getting into the ocean?” White said. “Is more plastic sinking out of the surface waters? Or is it being more efficiently broken down? We just don’t know. But the data on hand simply do not suggest that ‘plastic patches’ have increased in size. This is certainly an unexpected conclusion, but it may in part reflect the high spatial and temporal variability of plastic concentrations in the ocean and the limited number of samples that have been collected.”

The hyperbole about plastic patches saturating the media rankles White, who says such exaggeration can drive a wedge between the public and the scientific community. One recent claim that the garbage patch is as deep as the Golden Gate Bridge is tall is completely unfounded, she said.

“Most plastics either sink or float,” White pointed out. “Plastic isn’t likely to be evenly distributed through the top 100 feet of the water column.”

White says there is growing interest in removing plastic from the ocean, but such efforts will be costly, inefficient, and may have unforeseen consequences. It would be difficult, for example, to “corral” and remove plastic particles from ocean waters without inadvertently removing phytoplankton, zooplankton, and small surface-dwelling aquatic creatures.

“These small organisms are the heartbeat of the ocean,” she said. “They are the foundation of healthy ocean food chains and immensely more abundant than plastic debris.”

The relationship between microbes and plastic is what drew White and her C-MORE colleagues to their analysis in the first place. During a recent expedition, they discovered that photosynthetic microbes were thriving on many plastic particles, in essence confirming that plastic is prime real estate for certain microbes.

White also noted that while plastic may be beneficial to some organisms, it can also be toxic. Specifically, it is well-known that plastic debris can adsorb toxins such as PCB.

“On one hand, these plastics may help remove toxins from the water,” she said. “On the other hand, these same toxin-laden particles may be ingested by fish and seabirds. Plastic clearly does not belong in the ocean.”

Among other findings, which White believes should be part of the public dialogue on ocean trash:

Calculations show that the amount of energy it would take to remove plastics from the ocean is roughly 250 times the mass of the plastic itself;

Plastic also covers the ocean floor, particularly offshore of large population centers. A recent survey from the state of California found that 3 percent of the southern California Bight’s ocean floor was covered with plastic – roughly half the amount of ocean floor covered by lost fishing gear in the same location. But little, overall, is known about how much plastic has accumulated at the bottom of the ocean, and how far offshore this debris field extends;

It is a common misperception that you can see or quantify plastic from space. There are no tropical plastic islands out there and, in fact, most of the plastic isn’t even visible from the deck of a boat;

There are areas of the ocean largely unpolluted by plastic. A recent trawl White conducted in a remote section of water between Easter Island and Chile pulled in no plastic at all.

There are other issues with plastic, White said, including the possibility that floating debris may act as a vector for introducing invasive species into sensitive habitats.

“If there is a takeaway message, it’s that we should consider it good news that the ‘garbage patch’ doesn’t seem to be as bad as advertised,” White said, “but since it would be prohibitively costly to remove the plastic, we need to focus our efforts on preventing more trash from fouling our oceans in the first place.”

Thank you for considering these thoughts,
A concerned citizen

8/8/12

From: LApsel@aol.com

To: Eugene Mayor, City Council, and City Manager

Subject: the health danger in reusable bags

According to Family Circle magazine (Feb. 2012):

"97% [is] The percentage of people who never wash their reusable shopping bags according to a new survey. Researchers found large numbers of bacteria in all the sacks they tested, and even detected E coli in 8% of them."

Human health should be the primary environmental concern of our species. To outlaw plastic and paper bags and cause such an unavoidable increased exposure to bacteria, filth, and possibly vermin is particularly unfair to our elderly, our sick, including those with suppressed immune systems, and our young.

Remember, even that rare 3% who washes their bags are probably only doing so occasionally and encouraging washing affects the environment in another way with increased electrical and water usage anyway

I think that even as things are now, there should be separate grocery bagging counters to isolate germs and dirty reused bags from people wanting clean, new, germ free bags.

A small charge on bags to encourage reuse (at home!) and recycling, as with plastic bottles, seems preferable to encouraging the use of unsanitary, bacteria ridden reusable bags.

I am a firm environmentalist, but as someone with a weak immune system, I am horrified by this misguided harmful idea. The health of human beings comes first as we are indeed part of the environment and need to be protected too!

Lynn Reichman
Eugene

9/6/2012

From: Emily Stuart estuart122@gmail.com

To: Eugene Mayor, City Council, and City Manager

Subject: Please support the ban on single-use plastic bags in Eugene

Dear Mayor, City Council, and City Manager- I am writing to support a ban on single-use plastic checkout bags within the city of Eugene to reduce the use of plastic bags, encourage the use of reusable bags and reduce our dependence on finite natural resources. Such a policy should include a fee on paper bags to

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encourage reusables. I urge Eugene City Council to cut the flow of pollution into the ocean by banning disposable plastic bags.

Thank you for your time and consideration.

Emily Sangston

9/7/2012

From: ran6711@comcast.net

To: Eugene Mayor, City Council, and City Manager

Subject: Please support the ban on single-use plastic bags in Eugene

Dear Mayor, City Council, and City Manager- I am writing to support a ban on single-use plastic checkout bags within the city of Eugene to reduce the use of plastic bags, encourage the use of reusable bags and reduce our dependence on finite natural resources. Such a policy should include a fee on paper bags to encourage reusables. I urge Eugene City Council to cut the flow of pollution into the ocean by banning disposable plastic bags. Thank you for your time and consideration.

9/7/2012

From: Wayne and Kelly waykels@hotmail.com

To: Eugene Mayor, City Council, and City Manager

Subject: Please support the ban on single-use plastic bags in Eugene

Dear Mayor, City Council, and City Manager-

I am writing to support a ban on single-use plastic checkout bags within the city of Eugene to reduce the use of plastic bags, encourage the use of reusable bags and reduce our dependence on finite natural resources. Such a policy should include a fee on paper bags to encourage reusables. I urge Eugene City Council to cut the flow of pollution into the ocean by banning disposable plastic bags.

Thank you for your time and consideration.

Kelly Burke

146 Springwood Dr.

Eugene, OR 97404

9/8/2012

From: Ken Dickson ken-dickson@comcast.net

To: Stephanie Scafa Stephanie.scafa@ci.eugene.or.us

Stephanie,

Would you please forward my opinion on to the future meeting regarding elimination plastic bags use meeting. I would like to know how a person (as myself) is to transport items when using a wheelchair?

Has anyone (who is pushing) for this new law ever tried to handle transporting grocery's, or other items while using both hands to push themselves in a wheelchair? I have had to deal with obstacles for the last twenty years in my wheelchair. I find it hard to think that it will cost me 5 cents a bag for paper bags that will not help me transport items that the plastic bag helps me with. The plastic bag will not rip like a paper bag.

Double plastic bags with the handle helps me place the heavy items that I need on the back of my wheelchair. Another issue to think about. Will the health codes be addressed as to the care of unclean / reusable bags? I can see people having blood and other items soiling the "*So called reusable bag*" placed on the checkout counters that the public would be in contact. What type of precautions will be needed to prevent any food borne illness, for a dirty counter. I know that, I'm at that height of the check out counter. The stores give options to clean off the handle of the shopping cart. Will we be asked to clean the counters as we check out. I see the cost of living going up with no increase to my wages. I'm struggling to keep up my house hold. Will adding cost to my shopping help me? Think not! The leaders of this action better think before placing this burden on to the general public.

If asked, I'm opposed to this future action.

Sincerely,

Kenneth Dickson
433 Shamrock Ave.
Eugene, Oregon. 97404
Home phone: (541) 689-1481

9/9/2012

From: Lorraine Kerwood lorrainekerwood@gmail.com
To: Eugene Mayor, City Council, and City Manager
Subject: Please support the ban on single-use plastic bags in Eugene

Dear Mayor, City Council, and City Manager-

I am writing to support a ban on single-use plastic checkout bags within the city of Eugene to reduce the use of plastic bags, encourage the use of reusable bags and reduce our dependence on finite natural resources. Such a policy should include a fee on paper bags to encourage reusables. I urge Eugene City Council to cut the flow of pollution into the ocean by banning disposable plastic bags.

Thank you for your time and consideration.

Respectfully,
Lorraine Kerwood

9/10/2012

From: Andi Castle andicastle@gmail.com
To: Eugene Mayor, City Council, and City Manager

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Subject: Please support the ban on single-use plastic bags in Eugene

Dear Mayor, City Council, and City Manager-

I am writing to support a ban on single-use plastic checkout bags within the city of Eugene to reduce the use of plastic bags, encourage the use of reusable bags and reduce our dependence on finite natural resources. Such a policy should include a fee on paper bags to encourage reusable. I urge Eugene City Council to cut the flow of pollution into the ocean by banning disposable plastic bags.

Thank you for your time and consideration.

9/13/12

From: Greg Norman normgr00@yahoo.com
To: Eugene Mayor, City Council, and City Manager
Subject: Please ban plastic bags

Dear Mayor, City Council, and City Manager-

I am writing to support a ban on single-use plastic checkout bags within the city of Eugene to reduce the use of plastic bags, encourage the use of reusable bags and reduce our dependence on finite natural resources. Such a policy should include a fee on paper bags to encourage reusables. I urge Eugene City Council to cut the flow of pollution into the ocean by banning disposable plastic bags.

Thank you for your time and consideration.

9/13/12

From: dawnh65@comcast.net
To: Eugene Mayor, City Council, and City Manager
Subject: Please support a ban on bags in Eugene

Dear Mayor, City Council, and City Manager- I am writing to support a ban on single-use plastic checkout bags within the city of Eugene to reduce the use of plastic bags, encourage the use of reusable bags and reduce our dependence on finite natural resources. I urge Eugene City Council to cut the flow of pollution into the ocean by banning disposable plastic bags. I would like to add that Market of Choice and Trader Joes have already taken this step voluntarily with good results. Thank you for your time and consideration
Dawn Helwig

9/13/12

From: Lisa Jackson jackson.woodburne@gmail.com
To: Eugene Mayor, City Council, and City Manager
Subject: Please support a ban on bags in Eugene

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Dear Mayor, City Council, and City Manager-

I am writing to support a ban on single-use plastic checkout bags within the city of Eugene to reduce the use of plastic bags, encourage the use of reusable bags and reduce our dependence on finite natural resources. Such a policy should include a fee on paper bags to encourage reusables. I urge Eugene City Council to cut the flow of pollution into the ocean by banning disposable plastic bags.

It just takes a change in thinking by an individual to have a positive effect. I have been carrying reusable bags in my car and in my bike basket for so long that plastic bags are now superfluous to me. If plastic bags were unavailable then it wouldn't take long for everyone to adjust to a new shopping paradigm.

Thank you for your time and consideration.
have a great day
kind regards
Lisa Jackson

9/13/12

From: Letty Morgan lettymorgan@gmail.com
To: Eugene Mayor, City Council, and City Manager
Subject: Please support a ban on bags in Eugene

Dear Mayor, City Council, and City Manager-

I am writing to support a ban on single-use plastic checkout bags within the city of Eugene to reduce the use of plastic bags, encourage the use of reusable bags and reduce our dependence on finite natural resources. Such a policy should include a fee on paper bags to encourage reusables. I urge Eugene City Council to cut the flow of pollution into the ocean by banning disposable plastic bags.

Thank you for your time and consideration.

I would add to the above that I have used cloth bags for about six yrs now, and find them convenient, and much easier to use in carrying heavy loads. I often sling the bag over my shoulder and have two free hands to open the car, or whatever else needs done!

It is imperative that we rely less on plastic! PLEASE BAN DISPOSABLE PLASTIC BAGS ~~~ IT'S TIME!!!

Thank you!

Letty Morgan

9/13/12

From: kstingle@efn.org
To: Eugene Mayor, City Council, and City Manager
Subject: Please support a ban on bags in Eugene

Bag Ban Public Testimony 7/24/2012 – 9/17/2012

Dear Mayor, City Council, and City Manager-

I am writing to support a ban on single-use plastic checkout bags within the city of Eugene to reduce the use of plastic bags, encourage the use of reusable bags and reduce our dependence on finite natural resources. Such a policy should include a fee on paper bags to encourage reusables. I urge Eugene City Council to cut the flow of pollution into the ocean by banning disposable plastic bags.

Thank you for your time and consideration.

Karen Stingle
358 W 4th
Eugene 97401

9/14/12

From: Thea Evenstad thea.evenstad@gmail.com
To: Eugene Mayor, City Council, and City Manager
Subject: Please support a ban on bags in Eugene

Dear Mayor, City Council, and City Manager,

I am writing to support a ban on single-use plastic checkout bags within the city of Eugene to reduce the use of plastic bags, encourage the use of reusable bags, and reduce our dependence on finite natural resources. Such a policy should include a fee on paper bags to encourage reusables. I urge Eugene City Council to cut the flow of pollution into the ocean and reduce the amount of litter in our city by banning disposable plastic bags.

Thank you for your time and consideration.

Thea Evenstad

9/16/12

From: Aaron Williams theamorphousband@yahoo.com
To: Eugene Mayor, City Council, and City Manager
Subject: Please Ban the Plastic Bag!

As a citizen of Eugene, i urge you to ban the plastic bags! It just makes sense!

-aaron williams
58 E 24th Pl
Eugene, OR 97405

9/16/12

From: Sarah Adkison sarahvoyager@gmail.com
To: Eugene Mayor, City Council, and City Manager

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Subject: Please support a ban on bags in Eugene

Dear Mayor, City Council, and City Manager-

I am writing to support a ban on single-use plastic checkout bags within the city of Eugene to reduce the use of plastic bags, encourage the use of reusable bags and reduce our dependence on finite natural resources. Such a policy should include a fee on paper bags to encourage reusables. I urge Eugene City Council to cut the flow of pollution into the ocean by banning disposable plastic bags.

Thank you for your time and consideration.

9/17/12:

From: Teresa Adams onpurpose50@gmail.com
To: Eugene Mayor, City Council, and City Manager
Subject: CHARGE FOR PAPER BAGS

I am unable to attend the meeting tonight at the Library.

I do however want to ensure my vehement opposition to the charge for paper bags

I have not been using plastic bags of my own volition for years now but DO use paper bags for my garbage rather than plastic garbage bags. I feel I'm already doing my part to lessen the impact of plastic and especially by using paper for my garbage as well. I feel it an unnecessary and unfair toll to charge for paper.

T. Adams

9/17/12:

From: BIGGS Charles (SMTP) charles_biggs@hotmail.com
To: Eugene Mayor, City Council, and City Manager
Subject: ban on plastic bags more info to oppose the ban

Mayor and City Councilors,

I oppose the ban on plastic bags due to the health hazards they can and do pose. think of all those who go before you in the grocery line and where their recyclable bags have been. From the homeless to Oscar Hungers (from the Odd Couple TV show) in the world will give you and your family free of charge all the germs you can or can't handle. I also am against the 5 cent paper bag charge!

Bacteria In Reusable Bags

Unfortunately, there is a down side to using reusable grocery bags instead of disposable grocery bags. In fact, using reusable grocery bags can be downright hazardous to your health. This is because a handful of recent studies have found that reusable bags can be a breeding ground for harmful bacteria such as Coliform and E. coli, as well as noroviruses. These germs can live for extended periods of time on the inside of reusable bags. When your food is placed in those bags, it comes into contact with the bacteria and can make you ill.

How Bacteria Develops

Bacteria can develop inside reusable grocery bags for a variety of reasons. If meat is not sealed properly, small leaks can occur. The meaty juices can then leak out into the bag and contaminate other foods. After the foods have been emptied, the juices remain in the bag, creating the perfect environment for bacteria to develop.

It is not just meats that can contaminate these bags. Many individuals who are extremely careful about properly caring for meat often overlook the other potential hazards in the foods that they purchase. For example, residue from dirty cans, boxes, packages and bottles can all collect at the bottom and along the sides of reusable bags. Residue from fruits and vegetables can be equally hazardous.

Many people store their reusable grocery bags in their cars so they will always have them handy and available when they visit the grocery store. The problem with this is that all of that residue and contamination from meat juices is left inside the bag, festering in the heat of the car, sometimes for several days. <http://www.symptomfind.com/health/reusable-grocery-bags/>

Charles Biggs

9/17/12:

From: BIGGS Charles (SMTP) charles_biggs@hotmail.com
To: Eugene Mayor, City Council, and City Manager
Subject: plastic bag proposal

Dear Mayor and City Councilors,

I am against the proposed ban on plastic bags due to the recent events (May 2012) located here in Oregon (see below). Is the Mayor and City Council will to be liable for future illness due to the ban on plastic bags?

Charles Biggs

FOODBORNE ILLNESS INVESTIGATIONS

The Case of the Contaminated, Reusable Grocery Bag

How Oregon epidemiologists solved a norovirus mystery

BY MARY ROTHCHILD | MAY 10, 2012

Oregon state senior epidemiologist William Keene is a fan of Berton Roueché, whose books, like *Eleven Blue Men*, revealed the whodunnit work of epidemiology.



Now Keene, of the Oregon Public Health Division, and fellow sleuth Kimberly Repp, of Oregon Health and Sciences University, have cracked a case and told a real-life detective tale worthy of Roueché.

Writing in *The Journal of Infectious Diseases*, available [here](#) online, Keene and Repp explain how in October, 2010, a group of Oregon soccer players, 13 and 14 years old, and some adult chaperones, came down with norovirus during a tournament in Washington state.

One of the girls apparently was infected prior to the trip, and began vomiting and suffering bouts of diarrhea late Saturday in the chaperone's hotel bathroom. The girl, who had no contact with her teammates after she became ill, was driven home in the morning.

But a reusable grocery bag filled with snacks -- packaged cookies, chips and grapes -- had been in the bathroom. The rest of the group ate that food during a Sunday lunch, and other members of the team were ill by Tuesday after they had returned to Oregon.

In investigating the outbreak, Keene and Repp found no connections to any other norovirus illnesses at the team's hotel, the tournament, or the restaurants where they had eaten. It wasn't until they learned about the bag in the bathroom that a "coherent story" emerged, Keene and Repp wrote.

Two weeks later, matching viruses were found on the sides of the bag.

Although the first sick girl said she did not touch the grocery bag, Keene and Repp theorize that the viruses had aerosolized in the bathroom and settled on the sack and the food items inside.

"What this report does is it helps raise awareness of the complex and indirect way that norovirus can spread," said Aron Hall, DVM, MSPH, with the Division of Viral Diseases at the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, in an [accompanying editorial](#). And in what could be a blurb for a Roueché-style book, Hall adds that the study authors provide "a fascinating example of how a unique exposure and transmission scenario can result in a norovirus outbreak."

The investigation shows how this tenacious virus "finds a way to move from host to host, even when those hosts have no direct contact with one another," Hall added.

Keene and Repp observe that "incidentally, this also illustrates one of the less obvious hazards of reusable grocery bags."

While they recommend not storing food in bathrooms, the study authors say "it is more important to emphasize that areas where aerosol exposures may have occurred should be thoroughly disinfected; this includes not only exposed surfaces, but also objects in the environment" that could become contaminated and spread infection.

In addition to thorough hand-washing, disinfecting affected areas with bleach-based solutions and dedicating bathrooms for use only by those who are sick are some practices that could limited outbreaks caused by such indirect contact, they suggest.

Noroviruses -- "perhaps the perfect human pathogens," according to Hall -- are the leading cause of gastroenteritis in the U.S. They are responsible for more than 21 million illnesses, 70,000

hospitalizations and 800 deaths annually in this country alone. People can get norovirus illness throughout the year, but cases generally peak between December and February.

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9/17/12:

From: Louise Prevost ouisaine@gmail.com

To: Eugene Mayor, City Council, and City Manager

Subject: plastic bag proposal

My name is Louise Prévost and I live at 265 W. 8th Avenue.
I live in Councilor Browns ward.

My family moved here in 1963. I grew up on Friendly street.
This is my hometown.

I presently live in the downtown exclusion zone, in Westtown on 8th. I also work downtown -I am self employed and work out of my apartment; I am a vendor at Saturday Market and sometimes the Tuesday Farmers Market and attend meetings at the Saturday Market office on Broadway; and I do care giving and frequently drop by the office for Senior and Disabled on Willamette street. I also shop downtown at those stores that have what I can use or need, and I eat, attend events, volunteer at events and enjoy socializing with friends in the downtown.

In short, the downtown is my neighbourhood.

I would like to urge the City Council to allow the Downtown Public Safety Zone Ordinance to sunset.

I have heard some people say that they believe the exclusion zone has made the downtown core more inviting and pleasant and safer feeling to be in. I disagree - it is the people who are making the downtown more inviting, pleasant and safer feeling to be in. All the people who live here, work here shop here and otherwise visit here have the power to make the area more of a community and it is a sense of community that has and will bring the downtown back to life.

I find even the suggestion that so much police protection is necessary for people to open shops or visit the area a bit disconcerting in fact.

People may find it annoying to sometimes have people who look or live differently from them be nearby and perhaps ask for spare change, but while this might be annoying it is not criminal. And if someone is afraid to go somewhere because their little personal bubble might get burst for a second I really have to think they need to get a grip. While it may be difficult for some to share the sidewalks with the homeless comfortably, I am pretty sure that even more or most people feel alarmed and afraid when there are a large number of cops surrounding one or two people. I have seen as many as a half dozen cops surround a single drunk on the sidewalk. I saw just that outside my home on June 5th. I stepped outside my building and initially thought that perhaps the liquor store had been robbed or maybe someone had been shot because of all the cop cars (I counted 5) and cops. My neighbour informed me that he had been watching and all he saw was a drunk that was sitting on the sidewalk and

refusing to get up. Besides the waste of taxpayer money in such a large presence to respond to a single drunk it can be alarming to the public to see so many police and not know why. That the above took place in front of a line of people waiting to get into the Dining Room (all peaceful, I didn't hear a peep from them) serves the impression that I sometimes feel that the police are generating more fear than a situation warrants in order to secure their jobs.

I am pretty sure that when people see a number of cops surrounding someone like this their first thought IS NOT "Lets stop and go shopping and then have dinner here".

Just a few years ago, the downtown was a very desolate and depressing area and very concerning. In my opinion, in terms of the "Broken Windows Theory", I think the city and some downtown interests skipped a beat by not taking the landlords more to task earlier on in fighting urban blight in our midst. Instead of broken windows, we got a slew of "No Trespassing" signs going up all over, an unfriendly blight of a different sort.

As an example of community building, I'll mention the Eugene Storefront Art Project that would contact landlords, many of them absentee, in order to get permission to go in, clean up and place art in the storefronts of otherwise vacant and derelict buildings. I do know that several storefronts were rented directly because of these efforts. Local artists sold art. The downtown had much more attractive storefronts. It has been a win-win-win situation for the landlords, the artists, and the city and a positive step people have taken upon themselves to create a more inviting and attractive downtown.

There are more and more people who are and will be creating a vibrant and lively downtown by living and working here. I think the addition of benches would be better for downtown's growth than spending time and money on writing and rewriting the exclusion zone. There will be more businesses and reasons for people to travel downtown. Things are looking better and I like to think will continue to improve.

I have seen two versions of the Downtown Public Safety Ordinance. The ordinance as it has been has obvious rights issues as it allows police to exclude people from downtown before they have even been to court. The revision reflects these concerns and eliminates this 90 day exclusion provision.

I would urge that neither version be extended for the future. The original version should sunset because of it's potential costly legal ramifications for the city should someone sue, and the second version because it essentially says that a judge may exclude people from an area as part of sentencing. As I understand, a judge may already exclude a person from an area as part of sentencing, so this ordinance is now redundant.

Also, I will quickly say I would urge the council to not pass the amendment to allow the police the right to ride bikes on sidewalks after the fact. They should own up to having said they had the right when they did not and should be walking their bikes like every other citizen unless in direct pursuit or en route to an emergency.

And I am in favour of banning plastic bags.

Thank you for your time.

Louise Prévost

9/17/12

From: TonyCooley@comcast.net
To: Eugene Mayor, City Council, and City Manager

Please do not support the City of Eugene's ban on Plastic Bags.

This ordinance puts a burden on business, increases cost to consumers and is flawed in many of the assumptions used, for instance:

- These bags are NOT single use. We and everyone we know use them for many things from lining waste baskets and picking up dog waste to re-use applications with food storage or school lunches. Banning the bag would have no affect in reducing waste, it would simply add to our expenses as we would need to now purchase bags for these needs.

- Bag recycling is NOT difficult and is as simple as returning and re-using the bag at the store. Many stores already support this.

Given today's economic climate this is not the time to burden business while adding expenses to consumers. To move forward simply because the ban is "probably inevitable" as Chris Pryor stated in July is not showing leadership. Show some leadership by not acting, but recognizing the need for further evaluation. This is not an urgent issue.

As the State of Oregon did, in lieu of a ban, please consider a statement in favor of increased use of re-usable bags, increased recycling efforts of plastic bags, and support for science to develop bio-technology which would enable the bags to break down rapidly when exposed to the elements. Postpone a ban decision for 5 years and let the experiment (and economic burdens) other cities who have banned bags be evaluated. Taking this approach encourages jobs and economic stability as opposed to a ban that encumbers business, consumers and the city all at once.

The issue is not one of urgency, let's slow down, recognize there may be a need for some change but evaluate all alternatives and consequences fully before acting.

Thank you for this consideration.

Tony Cooley
Eugene

9/17/12

From: lou97404@yahoo.com
To: Eugene Mayor, City Council, and City Manager

I agree that on the face of it it appears a good idea to ban the use of grocery store plastic bags. However, a deeper look at the issue presents a different story. We reuse our bags to pick up after our dog. Without those bags we would have to buy plastic bags for that purpose. We also reuse the bags as

trash can liners. Again, without those bags we would be purchasing bags for that purpose. So two specific instances where a thin, free bag would be replaced by a thicker and expensive bag. Then there is the issue of bacterial cross contamination. Studies have shown the fabric bags become contaminated from not being carefully washed, then the contamination is transferred to the food you bring home from the store.

Please, do not vote for a ban on plastic bags.

Thank You,
Lou Engle

From: George Hermach [mailto:georuth12@comcast.net]
Sent: Saturday, September 22, 2012 11:09 AM
To: *Eugene Mayor, City Council, and City Manager
Subject: further comment re plastic bags

Dear Mayor, Council Members and Manager:

We have sent comments on this subject on March 2, 2012 detailing our objections to a city-wide ban on plastic bags. We offer further comments for your consideration.

We find the objections to plastic bags are not supported by documented studies and factual evidence, but are more anecdotal. I urge that you consider the broader issues of plastics in general. Most manufactured products produced today make use of significant percentages of plastic, both structurally and in their inherent design. Almost all goods are packaged in plastic. Most of the world's clothing is produced from plastic. Most of the goods on grocer's shelves are contained in plastic or at least plastic coated. Pharmaceuticals, cosmetics, cleaning products etc are all in plastic containers. And the giant remains, plastic drink containers

Recycling continues to advance slowly, limited by the attempt at automated machinery rather than human labor. Escaped or deliberately tossed trash in our landscape is not predominantly plastic bags, but a very wide variety of items including paper products and bags.

Ocean contamination consists of many things, but larger mass plastics such as disintegrating bottles and containers predominate.

We believe to selectively ban a single plastic item forcing use of much more damaging paper bags to be very unwise. The multiple advantages of thin plastic bags have been well demonstrated. They are more cheaply and easily recycled than paper bags.

The preferred use of hydrocarbon is moving towards recyclable products and not to be burned and consumed as an energy source. For instance polyethylene film is primarily produced from natural gas and is recyclable indefinitely.

Please seek better solutions to tossed trash. Some countries put people in jail for tossing a cigarette butt. Please do not deprive citizens of a very remarkable, low cost, efficient product that we all use every day.

George R. Hermach
2165 W 29th Ave
Eugene, OR 97405
541-686-2793

We include our previous comments dated March 2, 2012:

We offer our comments re your consideration of a possible ban on plastic grocery bags.

As dedicated environmentalists, we have reviewed many studies which conclude that kraft paper bags are not environmentally superior to plastic bags, considering the much larger product mass, raw materials required, processing and fabrication, inconvenience of use (weak handles), and lack of secondary use. They are much more expensive.

The light weight plastic bags, so universally used, have a very tiny mass, probably similar to a couple of grains of wheat. As a family, we reuse all of the plastic bags we receive, almost entirely to sanitarily contain the small amount of kitchen waste we generate. The convenient handles fit over the wire rack we have fastened to the cabinet door under the sink. When full, we tie the handles together before it is deposited in the 32 gallon Sanipac can. No garbage is ever spilled in the automated dumping process Sanipac employs.

If we no longer obtain plastic bags from retailers, we would have to purchase them in bulk from plastic bag suppliers.

We have never placed a plastic bag in Sanipac's recycling bins. We have never deposited them elsewhere, discarded them in the environment, or lost them to the wind. The amount of bags we receive seems to match our needs and creates no unwanted surplus.

We consider plastic bags far, far superior to kraft paper bags, both in handling groceries and in subsequent uses. Plastic bags are moisture proof and paper bags are not. We have experienced spilled groceries many times due to torn handles and ripped bottoms when moist produce weakens them. Plastic bags are just as recycleable as paper, perhaps even more so.

We are well aware of the power of the timber industry in Oregon and the prolonged, well financed campaign to prohibit plastic bags. A proper solution to abandoned bags, whether plastic or paper, is education. Bags have many uses and need not be discarded in the larger environment. Retailers certainly recover their bag costs in their pricing structures. While we always bring our five cloth bags to Market of Choice, it is not practical to do that for every store on our shopping route, such as Longs and Newmans. A separate charge for bags is an unnecessary inconvenience, both to the retailer and the customer. Surely there is a better solution to ocean pollution. Increase fines and penalties for improper trash disposal.

We urge that you study this issue more intensively, using all of the sources of information available.

We suggest that there are more important issues facing our community than banning plastic bags.

Sincerely,

George R. Hermach
2165 West 29th Ave
Eugene 97405

541-686-2793